

Since the inception of the Native Plants Study Area Project in the spring of 2002, students, government agencies, and non-profit organizations have participated in many aspects of this multi-functional environmental initiative. This initiative has increased the availability of native plant seed sources, created new research opportunities, added hands-on student training, and increased local public awareness of the ecological value of native plants. Currently, work has begun on three on-campus sites: (1) the native flora jack pine savanna, (2) the automated NWS weather tower, and (3) the retention pond/wetland. Future plans also include the development of a small arboretum and an area for students to study the successional processes of a mixed woodland environment. Student volunteers from the NMU Environmental Science Organization, working closely with faculty and the U.S. Forest Service staff, have propagated a multi-plot native flora study area that will serve as an outdoor teaching and research laboratory. In addition the site will be used to propagate seed to assist with the restoration of several off-campus properties (including a unique swale and dune area) and other regional restoration initiatives.